

A brief history of Fastelavn, from past to present.



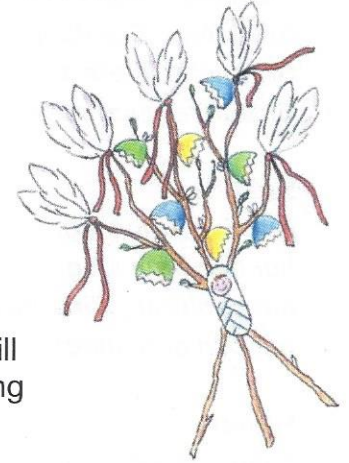
The Danish and Norwegian name **Fastelavn** stems from the low-German word *Fasteabend*, which literally means the eve before the fast begins.

Swedish- *Fettisdagen, fastlagstidagen*; Finnish- *laskiaistiistain*; Icelandic- *bolludagur*

Fastelavn always falls between Feb. 1st. and March 7th.

Swedish- *Fastlagsris, Påskris*; ; Finnish- *laskiaispulla*

Fastelavnsriset (the decorated branches) hold much symbolism. It was a special right for kids to wake up their parents using the fastelavnsris in order to be rewarded with a ...

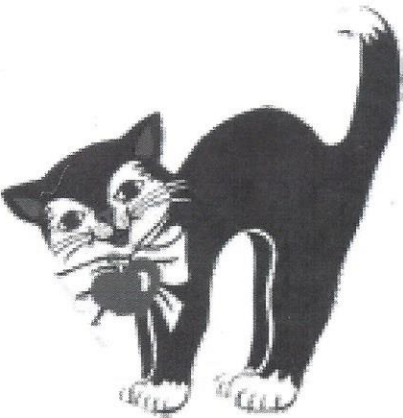


fastelavnsbolle (a Lenten sweet bun). It is still a tradition today to bake fastelavnsboller during this season. The other Nordic countries also have their versions of these treats:

Swedish- *semlor*; Finnish- *laskiaispulla*

'Slå katten af tønden' -means hit the barrel to free the cat. This tradition is still active today on Fastelavn's Sunday. Most children still dress-up and they may go from door to door, rattling cans begging for coins, and sing the Fastelavns song.

Historically there was a real black cat in the barrel, and beating the barrel was superstitiously considered a safeguard against evil. After the candy pours out, the game continues until the entire barrel is broken. The one who knocks down the bottom of the barrel (making all the candy spill out) becomes **kattedronning** ("queen of cats"); the one who knocks down the last piece of the barrel becomes **kattekonge** ("king of cats").



Fastelavns song.

*Fastelavn er mit navn,
boller vil jeg have,
hvis jeg ingen boller faar,
så laver jeg ballade.*

Fastelavn is my name,
sweet buns is what I want,
if I no sweet buns receive,
then I will make some trouble.

*Boller op og boller ned,
og boller i min mave,
hvis jeg ingen boller faar,
saa laver jeg ballade!*

Sweet buns up, and sweet buns down,
and sweet buns in my tummy,
if I no sweet buns receive,
then I will make some trouble.